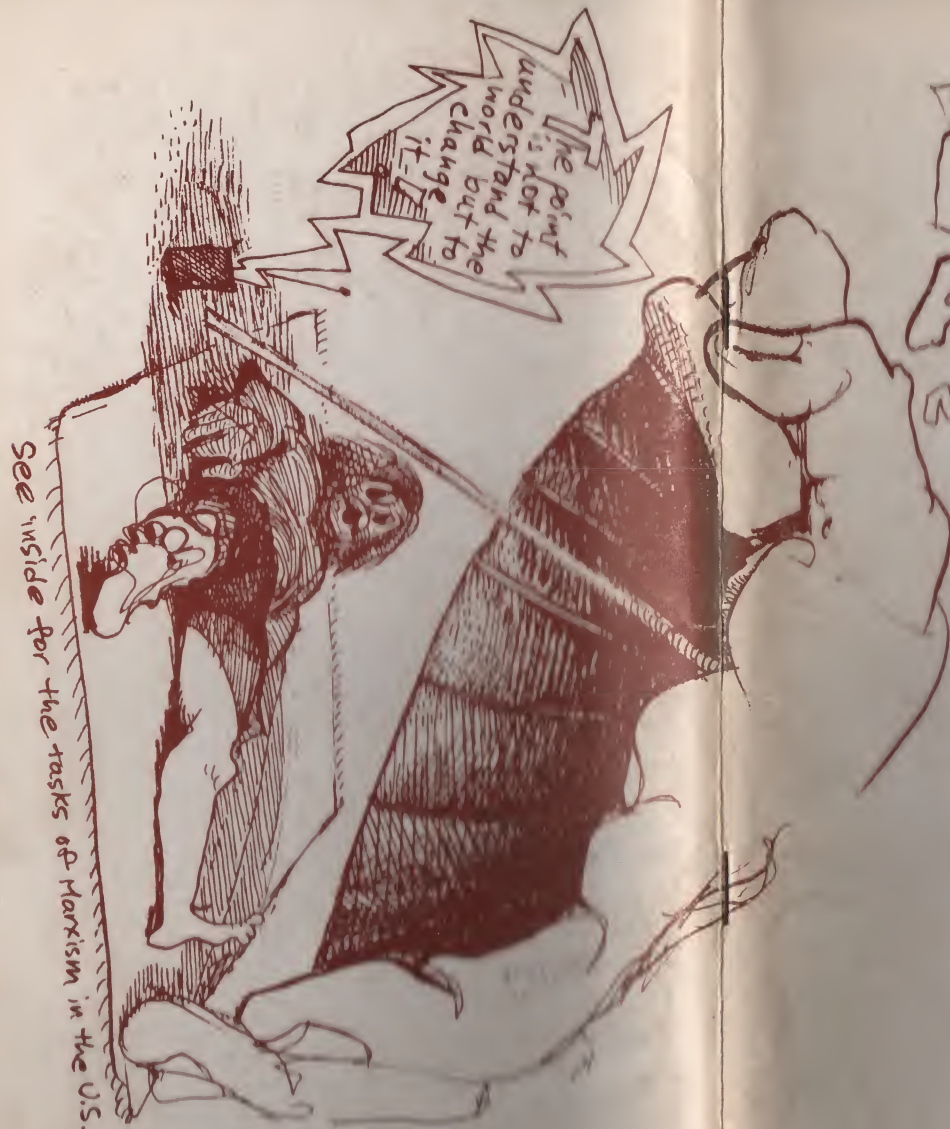


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See inside for the tasks of Marxism in the U.S.

RADICAL AMERICA

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*Editors' Introduction*

With this number, Radical America ends another period of its existence. The changes which will become increasingly clear over the next several issues have been made possible by the gradual unfolding of a class militancy unknown in its intensity for a generation; our transfer from Madison to the East Coast; and, related to both, our development toward a fuller Marxist world-view.

Radical America's birth in 1967 was conditioned on the one hand by the existence of SDS in its prime; and on the other by the general indifference among SDS (and other radical) intellectuals toward the specific nature of American radicalism. Thus the name: an affirmation of the existence of a radical America, whose past seemed (for better or worse) very familiar to the theoretically indifferent, activist politics of radical college youth in that period. At first, RA was narrowly calculated to "find the answers" in the mistakes of past radicals. Only gradually did it emerge that almost no one knew the questions. In Madison, Wisconsin, a kind of mid-Sixties mecca for intellectual campus Marxism, RA's editorial scope broadened. Perhaps archetypically American and New Left, it was the only Marxist journal in the world to produce a comic book as one number (Volume 3, Number 1) and the first American journal since the 1940s to devote a full number to Surrealism (Volume 4, Number 1). As the New Left went into crisis and collapse, RA's second notion emerged: that it would speak to the long-range task of laying the foundations for a new movement that would finally come into existence when the confusion and discouragement of the current one faded. The mode of expression taken by RA was a series of monographs,

nearly all methodological in nature, published over 1970.

At last this orientation proved inadequate: There was neither the internal coherence nor the external demand from former and current Movement people who read RA to justify the continuation of a monograph series. Thus, the first functioning editorial board of RA was convened last fall, to provide a clearer if more narrow focus. RA in its third notion was transformed into a journal largely concerned with the history, development, and prospects of the American working class (and of the European working class, especially as it shed light on possible future developments here). As such, RA gained a self-recognition and also some recognition of an audience of activists interested or involved in the class developments in their gestation period.

The existence of an independent (organizationally unaffiliated) radical journal implies the view by the editors of the inadequacy of existing Marxist thought and/or practice. RA has believed itself to be a journal for the creation of a view adequate to modern conceptions—the whole of modern life—pointing toward a conception of the world which Marxism since Marx has almost consistently lacked, but which is more than ever obligatory for informed practice. RA will now seek the next logical step in its development: the combining of the full implications of a methodological critique with the class critique of its latest phase, introducing explicitly and in avowed political terms what Marxism must become.

The appearance of CLR James' work in the context of our preparation for the leap ahead should be no surprise to regular RA readers. More than the work of any other living figure, James' efforts to render Marxism an all-sided theory and practice has served as an example and an encouragement. The "CLR James Anthology" (RA Volume 4, Number 4) sought

to convey the breadth of James' labor from the American working class to cricket, from Lenin to literature. Here we offer a more specifically political selection, reflecting James' status as a major Third World Marxist theorist. James' best-known work, *Black Jacobins*, was a depiction of the San Domingo revolt of the 1790s, but more than that: It portrayed the relation of the Third World to the developed nations in the revolutionary process. In that first stage of modern revolution, the black field workers' revolt, led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, demolished a mighty French army under Lafayette, and aided the success of French revolutionary forces; and the proclamation of the Republic equally contributed to the triumph of the ex-slaves in Haiti. Nearly two hundred years later, it has been belatedly discovered by Western Marxism as a whole that the Third World striving for self-liberation is a catchspring for release of potentially revolutionary working-class forces for decades contained by Imperialism. James expresses the intimacy of the relations of workers and peasants across thousands of miles by showing the direct relevance of Hegel's "Slave-Master Relationship" (applied by Marx to the Western working class) to all struggles, including that of the Vietnamese. And uniquely, James seeks not merely to preserve but to extend and expand upon Lenin's understanding of world revolutionary forces, far more important for James than the theory of the Party which "Leninists" and "anti-Leninists" alike have seized upon as Lenin's major contribution.

At last, James shows, activity grows where only theory could promise in the past. Along with Du Bois, George Padmore, and a handful of others, James was a figure of enormous stature in the expression of notions that were to be encompassed in the African anti-colonial struggles. Now a young black man in America, who spends a quarter of his life in prison's solitary confinement, can give voice with tremendous

eloquence to the forces at the center of the civilization which cry aloud for self-realization. This reality is a vindication of James' own theoretical method, which has focused on the activity of the masses of people rather than the competition of the sects for Lenin's mantle. More important, the valorous existence of George Jackson is the best evidence of James' conclusion that we have reached perhaps a "decisive and final stage" in the world revolutionary process. Whether Socialism or Barbarism lie ahead, we cannot persist for many decades in our present situation.

The "Propositions" fit naturally into the context of James' writing, for although independently conceived, they could not have been offered in their current form without the perceptions of modern society that James has offered. The central features of mass struggle in the United States are familiar to all: the unique pattern of class activity shaped by increasingly innovative technology (and its physical and psychological demands on the worker); the particularly important role played by Third World forces and by women in the social life of the nation and thereby in the work force; the distortion of class initiatives within Imperial society and the partial unloosening of the forces of motion with Imperialism's partial decay; the birth and beginning fragmentation of mass culture in the Twentieth Century; and, reflecting all these, the difficulties and opportunities posed for unalienated forms of organized struggle within the emerging mass movements. The inter-relations of these various tendencies remain, however, shrouded in political mystery. The Propositions should be seen as no more than a transitional means to clarify the writer's understanding and to encourage discussion around the basic themes. If well-based, these notions will re-emerge in more substantial form within RA, as greater self-consciousness and a grander view of the world are gained.

C.L.R. James, I

Peasants and Workers

The following consists of two major excerpts from "The Gathering Forces", written in 1967 as a draft for a document to appear on the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Never published, this abortive document was to be the third major statement of the positions of James' group (following State Capitalism and World Revolution in 1949, and Facing Reality in 1958). Sections of our excerpts were written by Martin Glaberman, William Gorman and George Rawick in collaboration with James.

Preface

A three-way division of affairs among Russia, China, and the United States dominates world politics today. Two nations out of these three are governed, according to their official declarations, by the theories and practices of Marxism-Leninism. The human consciousness must inescapably satisfy itself with answers to the questions: What exactly is this all about and how did it come to be? Has it always been so, and, if not, when and how did such a state of affairs take place?

Prospects of war and peace, budgets, armies, parties, elections, trade and cultural exchanges, the United Nations, and the Third World of emerging nations, are all entangled. Hundreds of millions cover their eyes and, sick of the dehumanization of civilized society, shut off news of interminable and unsolvable conflict between Russia and China on the one side, and American attempts to dominate the world on the other.

What is being awaited is a consummation of what began with the breakup of the Eastern Front in World War I: the arrival of the populace politically onto the streets of Petrograd and Moscow. The October Revolution of 1917 was the initial landmark on the landscape of war and revolution, mass initiative and class repressions, self-liberating efforts and alienating mystifications. A breaking point in human existence began in October 1917 and now awaits resolution. After Stalinism, Khrushchevism, and the bewildering profundities of Chairman Mao, the present generation is suffused with the desire to arrive at the terminal point of the Twentieth Century political upheavals.

In the same Russia today, October is celebrated by self-congratulations accompanied by displays of the latest missiles, tanks, and rockets. The United States — while still declaring how it deplors the rise of Bolshevism — compares the mellowness of the present Russian leaders with the intransigence of the Chinese. Furthermore, an event which, upon its happening, had made bright man's hopes is now used as an occasion to insist that the great majorities of the populations cannot alter or improve their conditions of life.

Fifty years ago, the October Revolution made mankind aware of the task placed in the hands of the proletariat: destroying the accepted, constantly increasing evils of capitalist society. Today there has emerged a new force to join the proletariat, comprising hundreds of millions. This force is engaged in the struggle to rid contemporary society of the incubus which weighs upon it and which threatens to destroy mankind itself by fratricidal struggles for power. This force is the people of the Third World, whose liberation is possible only by the destruction of the economic and cultural domination of imperialism. For us who celebrate the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution this political emergence of

the Third World is a culmination of what emerged from theory into reality in October 1917.

What is new in our analysis will concern itself above all with the emergence of this new form which struggles to complete what the October Revolution began. But it is necessary, first and foremost, to understand what was the October Revolution, what it did and what it did not do.

OCTOBER

War is the mother of revolution. Everywhere revulsion was the logical response to three years of trench mud and carnage, only in Russia did world war give birth to completely volcanic social reorganization. Strict objectivity compels not a mere listing of reasons but a statement of premises.

The largest factory known in the world anywhere in the year 1917 was the Putilov works in Leningrad. The co-ordinate labor of that factory involved 40,000 people. Other factories surrounded it in the same district. Capital had put them there. The backwardness of transport in the large mass of land area that is Russia geographically concentrated the forces of the Russian workers socially. The Russian autocracy and its secret police, fearful of the slightest liberalizing influences from European civilization, set up the strictest barriers as a means of self-protection and self-perpetuation. This in turn gave to the Russian working class a certain inner freedom from inhibiting traditionalism and organizational fixity, and mere imitation of the rest of Europe. There was no exclusivism of trade unions, arbitration machinery, grievance umpires, or pettyfogging about "equity".

Compared to Russian society as a whole, the number of industrial workers was small. The bulk of the workers were one or two generations away from the land, from social isolation on the vastest countryside in all the world. But the working class was fresh.

It was as if the inner class life of the American working class had begun with the CIO, or that of their British working-class brothers had begun with the movement of shop stewards.

Class power, combined with the creative appropriation by the Russian intelligentsia of the discoveries of Western civilization before and particularly after 1789, was the specific potential of the new industrial working class. Class paralysis in the face of the traditional brutishness of the Russian aristocracy capped by a Czar was the specific immediate reaction of the small Russian bourgeoisie. They were dominated, in their minds if not completely in fact, by foreign capital.

Both bourgeoisie and working class were small in peasant Russia. The future could not even believe in itself in that war period of a royal family guided by the monk Rasputin at the center of power.

The intelligentsia, which, unlike that of other countries, did not automatically ally itself with the class above, moved through the exacting discipline of the politics of an approaching revolution to define its relation to the new working class.

Viewed from the standpoint of the development of civilization — mankind's capacity to understand itself and its prospects — the work of the Russian intelligentsia constitutes one of the wonders of the world. The brilliance of the intellectuals was due to their European strivings at a time when German philosophy, French literature, and British politics were stagnant. The transition from the Nineteenth to the Twentieth Century in what is broadly called culture is in the great achievements of the phenomenal Russian intelligentsia. In drama, novel, ballet, poetry, literary criticism, musical expressiveness, they transformed the relations of the Nineteenth to the Twentieth Century. The constitutive elements of an entire epoch were created. No proof in the conventional meaning of that word will be offered here. In

the dialectic of the actual development, including the politics of the later stage, that of the degeneration of the 1917 revolution, politics offers the historical proof.

One more point must be made. The entrance of bourgeois economy into Russia did not so much weaken as accentuate the caste character of Russian social life. It is comparable to how in the United States the very triumph of the powerful captains of industry refastened more perniciously the manacles and even the lynch mob's rope onto the Negro emancipated by the Civil War. Class reinforced itself administratively as caste. Russia was familiarly known



to the world as the prison house of peoples. This was not only because its pre-1917 existence was the closest to a police state that period could recognize. It was so because of the variety of people and ethnic groups within the country itself forbidden the use of

their own language or native institutions.

We can thus help to resolve the mystery as to why October is Russian. Its resistant intelligentsia was European, its working class small but with a concentration unique in European history, its minorities lived in the recesses of the inner colonialism of Czarist power. This all together was the nurturing ground of what is called Bolshevism. When the war came in 1914, despite the fact that a full theoretical understanding had to await Lenin's great achievements during the war, these Bolshevik enclaves did not succumb as did the Social Democracy everywhere to imperialism, the bourgeoisification of skilled workers, the corruptions of the parliamentary system, the great war of all the nation states.

There was a corresponding development in the relationship between the working class and its representative party, which found the source for its strength in the experiences of the factory and the workers' districts. The revolutionary creations and the experiences of 1905 were the curtain raiser for the victory of 1917. The defeat of the military pretensions of the Czar in the 1904-1905 war against Japan stimulated the workers — as the defeat of rulers has stimulated the oppressed populations since time immemorial — to the measures which went far beyond anything West Europe had known: the general strike, the political general strike, and finally the creation of Councils — the Soviets.

When the Soviet appeared it consisted of one representative for every five hundred workers in a factory. The peasants, organized in the Army, started to form Soviets for themselves. The rapid formation of the Soviets, lightning-like progress of strikes, and armed extension of struggle tell us things which no experts on the theory of the powerlessness of permanently alienated populations dare even to think. Soviets and general strike did not wait upon any party. Parties attached to the cause of the working class

had to adapt themselves to Soviets while no wise giving up the aspirations to democratic rights and elections of representatives to government in the familiar bourgeois manner. 1917 provided the final curtain to the historical stage opening in 1905. The ruling class no longer had any claim of leading the Russian nation or even showing any capacity of disciplining its own hollow personnel. Soldiers fled the front and the trial of strength began.

Both the present American and Russian rulers believe that the Bolshevik Party made the revolution; the former hold this idea with regrets, and the latter with grandiose self-adulation. The same glaring mental, that is, political, defect displays itself in all sectors of opinion both from those for and those against the Russian Revolution.

Thus, those small vanguard groupings of political radicals who have never had the taste of power ascribe the wonders of its arrival to the power of correct slogans. But Peace, Bread, and Land were not the blare of an advertised uprising. The critical element was a population poised upon split-second's notice to act upon its impulses, not in the everyday sense, but to rescue society from the bottomless pit of trench warfare and state corruption. Slogans make aspirations more palpable, but it is a self-prepared people that make fundamental revolution.

February 1917 witnessed the abdication of the Czar and the formation of what Lenin himself described as the freest republic the world had ever known. The working class was seeking to abolish itself as a mere component cog in the machinery of production, the soldiers were struggling to end the corrupting role in the machinery of war, and the serfs were permeated with the desire to make themselves into an independent yeomanry such as Russia had never seen before. Freedom could no longer be a matter of right. It was the content of human-social activity, above all politics. When you have such large-scale social ex-

perience, infinite in its immeasurability — millions in and out of the battlefield, or out on strike, parading their power through the major streets of cities, transport and communication broken down so that the most ordinary routines of life become a matter to be settled on the spot as necessity dictates — then the establishment of new social ties becomes the most natural and inevitable thing in the world. Sailors of battleships were nestling in the Neva near Petrograd; soldiers had not only deserted, they were moving around on the streets of a major metropolis testing out for what and for whom their military experiences had truly prepared them. It produced the dominant simplicity of the revolutionary politics and even the finished style of its leading politician, that familiar homeliness of Lenin's utterances.

Lenin's style constitutes an enigma and even conspiratorial mystery to what parades itself before our eyes now as social science. Today this science goes round and round with its talk of the paradoxes of the Russians and the inscrutabilities of the even more distant Chinese. The meaning of the social interventions and social transformations of ordinary men and women in the midst of social revolution social scientists evade, leading them to create these mysteries, which lie at the heart of the scientific disciplines created and recreated in confusions.

Kerensky, one of the men of February 1917, may have been a fool to believe he could crate the Russian people back into World War I. More notable for 1967 is the vacillation and self-contortion of the whole section of the intelligentsia. They had tied the fate of Russia to its working class. They proved feckless when it came for the moment to establish the workers, now armed, as the government of the problem-laden, vast, and exhausted Russian society, cut off from Europe and having to depend upon its own internal social resources. The reluctance of Lenin's own co-workers on that famous Central Committee

to adopt the position of seizing the power, of turning February into October, was not cowardice or timidity. The politically trained intelligentsia was not any kind of effete aristocracy.

Its problem — the modern problem — is elsewhere. It is that the bourgeoisie have proven hopelessly ineffectual through depressions and war and calamitous crises of every kind. Only the workers remain to create a human society. But the intelligentsia, which considers itself the repository of everything civilized, must by the very nature of the accumulation of social relations through the centuries as well as immediately all around it, consider the working population to be incapable of facing and solving the problems of governing whole areas of economic, political, and social life.

Lenin was the embodiment of the best virtues of the Russian intelligentsia. This great Russian intelligentsia was European in mental scope, exacting in correctness of formulation and procedure, contemptuous of autocracy and hateful of the pogrom mentality which in the eyes of the world was Mother Russia. But there was a negative as well. An intellectual element of the population so conditioned to exile, so tenuous in its hold on national realities, so ephemeral in regard to its own experience in the practicalities of government, when once congealed into a party apparatus and thereby transformed from isolated individuals into the shadow of the state power it hopes to become, must inevitably turn into — particularly in caste-ridden Russia — an obstacle when the proletariat is ready to assert the full measure of its power.

Why then did Lenin succeed in spite of them? Not mere individual uniqueness but concrete universality provides the shape of the answer. Aside from being prepared by research and debate on the class character of Russian revolution, aside from the overwhelming homeliness and explicitness of his own political

make-up, aside from the self-discipline that political struggle inheres in individuals as well as in groups, Lenin knew the political alternatives as few people have been pressed and shaped to know them. For in the midst of that eight-month span between February and October, the whole backwash of Russian society and Russian history was preparing to drown the population in the ageless mud of Russian barbarism.

What Lenin knew, and what he knew the soldiers, workers, and peasants knew at the very first hand, was the fist of a Kolchak and a Kornilov, the naked barbarism of the counter-revolution. He knew what native barbarism could do and what mere oratory about freedom could not do. On this he deluded no one because he did not deceive himself as so many highly intelligent people have done not only before Hitler and Mussolini and Stalin but increasingly afterward. The seizure of political power by the working class, the shattering of all centers of authority was to prevent the making of politics into that specialized type of gangsterism so prevalent today that its existence marks off the world before World War I from the way we now live.

Besides the specificity of staying the whip of the counter-revolution, the genius of that much-abused Bolshevism of Lenin is that it added both to the vision and science of revolutionary politics more than all the political science courses in all the world's schools will ever be able to stare at plainly, let alone master as knowledge. Capitalist economy and the great mystery of the commodity over which Marx wrestled for so many pages was to become a matter of specific measures of workers' discipline and national public accounting. Large-scale funds were to be wrested from the parasitic owners by the self-motivated peasants. Only they could do that. Housing, in the absence of new construction, was to be provided by the occupation of unfilled, unused houses in overblown mansions by homeless tenants. Only they

could do that. International diplomacy consisted of the signing away of territories according to the will of the population living there. We cannot go on with this list indefinitely except to say that it is all this which distinguished Bolshevism from its opponent Menshevism.

It is this which distinguishes Bolshevism from all those to this very day and the day after tomorrow who believe that trench warfare for millions is possible, atomic bombs are possible, anti-missile missiles are possible, flights to the moon are possible, atomic disintegration of cities is possible, assassinations of political leaders are possible, all of these are not only possible but actually inevitable, whereas the proletarian seizure of political power is — impossible. It is this which provides the decisive dividing line between self-activity and mere chasing around, the "rat race" in short, on an international plane the gulf between human and subhuman modes of political release. Marxism in the Nineteenth Century demonstrated how the new society is nurtured even amidst the poisonous bosom of the old. Leninism contributed its originality and force to the notion of social-economic reconstruction as the true a priori, the sole a priori of all revolution for the Twentieth Century.

1923: WHAT WENT WRONG

In the Civil War in Russia, the Revolution had defeated the White armies that had been sponsored and supported by West European states, Japan, and the United States. With the defeat of these armies Soviet power now confronted the immense task of reconstructing the national economy in such a way that the new social relations of the revolution would reproduce themselves as viable self-activated institutions. Around these the work activity of the masses of men, women, and youth could be grouped. In order to com-

prehend these struggles of the last years of the Revolution, we must pay very careful attention to the specific problems and events.

"A great universal agrarian revolution was worked out with an audacity unprecedented in any other country, and at the same time, the imagination was lacking to work out a tenth-rate reform in office routine . . ." (Lenin, *Selected Works*, Volume 9, Page 396) Although workers are masters of detail labor, certain tasks were shifted onto professional administrators, or non-professionals aspiring to administer. The habits and methods of the Czarist bureaucracy were continued and deepened by the thousands of carryovers from the old regime and the thousands of new arrivals who copied and furthered their ways.

In all countries the state sees itself as mediator between various sections of the people. That Russian administrators saw their own position that way is quite certain. The problem in the crisis of 1921-1923 was not that the party had to grip together the two halves of the "scissors", the gap between socialized workers and individualized peasants. That anyone still believes this was the heart of the matter is the consequence of certain bureaucratic thought patterns, the heritage of tendencies which Lenin had set himself against.

Lenin in his last years counterposed to state and party the development of the cultural level of the whole population, through policies designed to get the direct involvement of the working population, urban and rural, in the solution of problems. Lenin never believed that there would be any completion of the building of socialism under conditions which approached pre-literary culture on the one side and the fragmented productivity of labor on the other. His approach was that of education but of the kind never seen elsewhere in the world at any time.

The working population had the power: landlords, capitalists, Czarists, and foreign powers all knew

that. But how to develop it? Lenin tied reconstruction of the economy to education. Trade unions were to educate the workers toward that voluntary self-discipline which guarantees a constantly higher productivity. Agricultural co-operatives were to transform a peasantry, conscious of their attainment of individual possession of the land, into free associations of producers on the countryside.

The main task, Lenin said, was "first, of learning, second, of learning, and third, of learning, and then of testing what we have learnt so it shall not remain a dead letter, or a fashionable phrase (and, it is no use concealing it, this often happens among us), so that what we have learnt may become part of our very beings, so that it may actually and fully become a constituent element of our social life." (*Selected Works*, Volume 9, Page 389) Culture would be taken away from the exclusive position it occupied in old Russia.

But, Lenin continued, "I know that it will be hard to follow this rule and apply it to our conditions. I know that the opposite rule will force its way through a thousand loopholes. I know that enormous resistance will have to be offered, that devilish persistence will have to be displayed, that . . . the work in this connection will be hellishly hard." (*Selected Works*, Volume 9, Page 389)

What went wrong in 1923 was that the opposite rule did force its way through a thousand loopholes, leading to a flight from the task of developing a new, revolutionary sophistication completing the transformation of a population set in motion by the revolution. And this was the base for the most extreme atrocities of Stalin which are now known to all the world.

The party of the Russian Revolution did not only fail at this new deep attempt to arouse the social resourcefulness of the population. It abdicated that realm entirely. It fled from it. Until this day such notions as Workers' and Peasants' inspection, where-

by every citizen, particularly the women, in Lenin's memorable phrase, were to examine regularly and systematically and audit the concrete affairs of the Soviet administration; trade unionism as the schooling of workers toward a communist society in which all state coercion disappears; agricultural co-operatives voluntarily formed by the populace in all areas of Russia, are all roundly abused or purposefully ignored, even by the most radical of radicals.

After the Civil War, after the triumph of one party over all others, this flight from the deepening of the revolutionary involvement of the populace accelerated. It was given its signal expression in the trade-union debates of 1920-1921. These debates announced the birth of modern state capital: the rise of governments so total, so peremptory in their attitudes, that they throttle the very notion of mass revolutionary initiative. The large parties which were presumably formed to act on the grievances of large sections of the people became transformed into the disciplinarians of workers, peasants, and all other revolutionary forces.

The particular conflict in 1921 involved Trotsky as chief commander of the victorious Red Army and a small union of Water Transport Workers. Out of this initial conflict came Trotsky's thesis about the subordination of the trade unions to party and state. Trotsky called for "shaking up" the trade unions. Tomskey, the member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party most concerned with trade-union affairs, fought this off as an attempt at the militarization of the laboring force and of its sole protective organization, the trade unions.

Lenin took the side of Tomskey, and in the next few months it was the Bolshevik Party and not the trade unions which was shaken up by rampant factionalism. In the isolation of the working class in a peasant country combined with the isolation of a workers' Russia in a bourgeois world, it was apparent that

everything accomplished up to then was in absolute peril. "The Russian found consolation for the bleak bureaucratic realities at home in unusually bold theoretical constructions, and that is why these unusually bold theoretical constructions assumed an unusually one-sided character among us." (Selected Works, Volume 9, Page 397)

The solution to the problem of the Russian Revolution was not, as Trotsky demonstrated, in brilliant formulations about more democracy at home in Russia and world revolution abroad. Nor was the solution the liberal theory of a multi-party state.

Lenin modestly noted, but with great powers of anticipation, what would inevitably happen when the mass intervention that was the Russian Revolution would begin to go downhill: "Our social life combines within itself an astonishing degree of fearless audacity and mental timidity..." (Selected Works, Volume 9, Page 394) This mental timidity was in the face of a population that had experienced for itself Soviets, insurrection, and civil war. By swelling the membership of the trade unions, the exhausted working class of an economically exhausted Russia was showing its recognition of where the threat of administrationism had reached and that they were prepared to do battle with it. The main obstacle was the very brilliance of one-sided Russian intellectualism functioning as the political leadership. In reaction to that kind of one-sided bold theoretical construction we have the emergence of Stalin.

Stalin, the party policeman, showed that he had no patience, and that the straitened economic circumstances of post-Civil War Russia allowed for no patience, with the one-sidedness of Russian intellectualism. Instead he chose the most self-specializing aspect of the modern state—the secret police and their penetration into all environs of political activity.

The inherent antagonism which Stalinism offered

to the activity of free human personalities can be seen most specifically when we examine the following lines of Lenin, among the last lines ever to flow from his pen:

"...much that was fantastic, even romantic, and even banal, in the dreams of the old co-operators is now becoming the most unvarnished reality.... Our co-operatives are looked down upon with contempt, but those who do so fail to understand the exceptional significance... from the aspect of the transition to the new order by means that will be simplest, easiest, and most intelligible...." (Selected Works, Volume 9, Page 403)

Lenin is speaking here specifically about the peasantry being educated toward co-operation. In the same years he took the position that the trade unions must be schools of the workers which would not only be institutions for the self-protection by the workers against a bureaucratic state apparatus; they would also, as the positive result of struggle, turn into schools of Communist management. And for the youth Lenin was insistent on learning, testing the learning by practice, and furthering the practice by increase of learning.

After the twenty million membership of the Soviets had coalesced with the party or had fallen away entirely from mass participation in government, the task of finding another way forward preoccupied Lenin.

"But this again is the most important thing. It is one thing to draw up fantastic plans for building Socialism by means of all sorts of workers' associations; but it is quite another thing to learn to build it practically, in such a way that every small peasant may take part in the work of construction." (Selected Works, Volume 9, Page 403. Italics in the original.) The conclusive word is "every".

Trotsky was eager for propaganda of the most extreme sort, propaganda combined with purely admin-

istrative party orders, army orders. The Soviet technicians were preparing themselves for the day of plans and production quotas. In the meantime Stalin was preparing his blows against specific individuals in the party. The result of all this, in the absence of a unified policy delineated by Lenin, was that the dictatorship swallowed the whole of society. That was Stalin whose arrival tells us of the consequences of an opposite policy and power.

Malenkov, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Kosygin all have talked of trying to undo what Stalin constructed. What Stalinism established will undo them, and all other heralds of some nebulous great internal reforms in Russia.

Socialized workers of Petrograd and Moscow, socialized peasants of the Russian Army, made the greatest social change the world has ever known. The failure to carry through the same penetration into mass impulse afterward, and at an even higher pitch of social tension, blocked the reconstruction of Russia as a new civilization.

We are often told that Lenin, the man who anticipated and warred against learning as a "dead letter, or a fashionable phrase" produced, or by means of his doctrine produced, a Joseph Stalin. This is revealed for the false notion it is both by the words of Lenin himself and by the figures of how many Leninists Stalin had to kill, the way he had to kill them, the pages that had to be torn out of history books, the sentences that had to be torn out of editions of Lenin's own writings.

Even the work of a Trotsky and his magnificent polemical war could not restrain the spread of the idee fixe that Leninism produced Stalinism. Only comprehension of what took place in October, and of what took place in its failure, can break up that idea in the manner that it deserves on this historic occasion.

Such a comprehension is assisted by the internal

setting of the world in which we live today. Lenin anticipated it:

"At the same time, precisely as a result of the last imperialist war, a number of countries — the East, India, China, et cetera — have been completely dislodged from their groove. Their development has completely shifted . . . The general European ferment has begun to affect them, and it is now clear to the whole world that they have been drawn into a process of development that cannot but lead to a crisis in the whole of world capitalism." (Selected Works, Volume 9, Page 398)

These lines of 1923 tell us, at least in general, more about the world in which we now live than do most of the pages of tomorrow morning's newspaper. Not the gift of prophecy, but the social weight of the Russian peasantry plus the underdeveloped character of the Russian economy, enabled Lenin to see what was emerging. The Russian experience poses the problem of reconstructing all of contemporary society along the most modern, sensible lines: the intertwining of the movements of the peasantry with those of the proletariat and all other revolutionary forces. No underdeveloped country has as yet been able to escape what was once called the "Russian Question". The critical components of 1922-23 are today the preoccupations of leaders and led, the organized and unorganized, small organizations and large parties, academic scholars and the most ordinary men and women of the street and work place.

THE THIRD WORLD: THE PEASANTRY

The reader will note that we are constantly talking about struggles, conflicts, the attempts of classes to dominate one another or break through to something new. This is supposed to be a special viciousness introduced into history by Marx and Lenin, ending in the inevitable bloodthirstiness and savagery of Stal-

inism. This is not only untrue, it is stupid.

Marx insisted from the beginning that he had not invented the class struggle, that he had not conjured it up as an idea or as a mere interpretation of historical actuality. Various others had done that before him and even more so afterward. Among the most specific additions that Marx made to social thought was while there had always been class conflicts, with the arrival of the workers at the industrial base of society, a class had come upon the scene which as the culmination of its struggle would abolish all classes and any notion of society as being in any way built upon class differentiation.

Deep in the evolution of European philosophy there was this concept of a life-and-death struggle for every single human being, in which each is engaged from the very beginning of his consciousness of the world. In the main it has been the prime purpose of political leaders, and of their philosophers, to deny any such general truth, even to indict it as criminal, while at the same time employing such a notion of life-and-death human struggle when it serves their specific purposes, as for example in a war. Before entering into the questions involving the world's peasant peoples, we must examine two quotations on this subject, one from a classic of philosophy, and the other, equally well-acknowledged, from sociology, the science of society. First Hegel.

In the extracts that follow, extracts that will be discussed as we go on, Hegel is dealing with the phenomenology of mind and he is saying what are the mental processes of people in society. He deals with the mental processes of the master and the slave, of the man in charge of an economic development and the man who is working for him.

"The presentation of itself, however, as pure abstraction of self-consciousness consists in showing itself as a pure negation of its objective form, or in showing that it is fettered to no determinate exist-

ence, that it is not bound at all by the particularity everywhere characteristic of existence as such, and is not tied up with life. The process of bringing all this out involves a twofold action — action on the part of the other (the person over there) and action on the part of itself. In so far as it is the other's action, each aims at the destruction and death of the other."

This is what has been taking place in Detroit and elsewhere in the United States, and throughout the world. It says: in so far as it is the other's action — other — two separate people — the relation between them, each aims at the destruction and death of the other.

"But in this there is implicated also the second kind of action, self-activity; for the former implies that it risks its own life."

The question is that in a class relation life is risked, and Hegel says a fundamental part of a relation of one section, one man to the other, and Marx and others have applied it to classes, is the fact that they are ready at a certain stage, the relation demands a fight to the death. Your life has to be risked.

"The relation of both self-consciousnesses is in this way so constituted that they prove themselves and each other through a life-and-death struggle."

In other words, the different sections of society cannot work out any system and cannot find out what they are to each other and what they are to themselves unless they reach a stage where they are fighting to the end and life and death are involved.

"They must enter into this struggle, for they must bring their certainty of themselves (you have to find out what you are), the certainty of being for themselves, to the level of objective truth, and make this a fact both in the case of the other and in their own case as well."

They have to fight to know what they are. They have to fight to know what they are going for. They have to fight to the death to know what the other fel-

low wants. And it is only under these conditions that some understanding of full self-consciousness is reached.

"And it is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained."

Otherwise you don't know. There are places where he says, you live a sort of superficial life and then:

"Only thus is it tried and proved that the essential nature of self-consciousness is not bare existence, is not the merely immediate form in which it at first makes its appearance, is not its mere absorption in the expanse of life. Rather it is thereby guaranteed that there is nothing present but what might be taken as a vanishing moment — that self-consciousness is merely pure self-existence, being-for-self. The individual, who has not staked his life, may, no doubt, be recognized as a Person; but he has not attained the truth of his recognition as an independent self-consciousness. In the same way each must aim at the death of the other, as it risks its own life thereby; for that other is to it of more worth than itself; the other's reality is presented to the former as an external other, as outside itself; it must cancel that externality. The other is a purely existent consciousness and entangled in manifold ways; it must view its otherness as pure existence for itself or as absolute negation." (Hegel: *Phenomenology of Mind*, Page 233)

We have been dealing with the relation between master and slave. Now he goes on to the bondsman. The master has one form of existence, the slave has another. And now Hegel says:

"But again, shaping or forming the object has not only the positive significance that the bondsman becomes thereby aware of himself as factually and objectively self-existent..." (Page 238)

It is in shaping the object for the master that the bondsman becomes aware of himself as factually and objectively self-existent.

"...this type of consciousness has also a negative

import, in contrast with its first moment, the element of fear. For in shaping the thing it only becomes aware of its own proper negativity...." (Page 239)

In working at the business it realizes its own insignificance, its own weakness:

"...its existence on its own account, as an object, through the fact that it cancels the actual form confronting it. But this objective negative element is precisely the alien, external reality, before which it trembled. Now, however, it destroys this extraneous alien negative, affirms and sets itself up as a negative in the element of permanence, and thereby becomes for itself a self-existent being." (Page 239)

By changing this thing in front of it and working for the master and being the person who handles it, it thereby becomes a self-existent being.

"In the master, the bondsman feels self-existence to be something external, an objective fact; in fear self-existence is present within himself; (but) in fashioning the thing, self-existence comes to be felt explicitly as his own proper being, and he attains the consciousness that he himself exists in its own right and on its own account." (Page 239)

The man is the slave to the master, and the self-existence of the consciousness of the slave is in reality the master. However they have reached the stage by fighting it out to the death, each understands the other and something begins. Now, however, he has to handle the goods which his master is going to enjoy and he is afraid of the master because he has to handle this thing and do it well. He realizes in his self-consciousness that the master is in reality the master of everything. But in shaping the thing and taking part in making it into something else, he then realizes his own self-consciousness as an independent being.

If we penetrate this bit of Hegel, we can come to understand the bitter but inevitable nature of the

struggles that go on in the world, and have gone on. From this we can comprehend the nature of the struggle of classes which Marx took from a commonplace observation to a profound and world-significant universal philosophical comprehension.

The life and death struggle that Hegel talks of appears in the bitter character of peasant wars from those in Germany in the Sixteenth Century to the guerrilla struggles in Latin America and Vietnam today. It characterizes as well the struggle of those who are some mere decades away from peasant existence, such as the Negro people of the United States.

What Hegel expostulated as philosophy for the individual thinker Marx proceeded to advance as the movement of social bodies. Marx wrote:

"What I did that was new was to prove (1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular, historic phases in the development of production; (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society." (Marx-Engels: *Selected Correspondence*, Page 57. *Italics in the original.*)

Those lines were written in 1852; they were pushed to a conclusion in Twentieth Century terms by Lenin:

"...a new source of great world storms opened up in Asia. The Russian Revolution was followed by the Turkish, the Persian, and the Chinese revolutions. It is in this era of storms and their 'repercussions' on Europe that we are now living. Whatever may be the fate of the great Chinese Republic, against which the various 'civilized' hyenas are now baring their teeth, no power on earth can restore the old serfdom in Asia or wipe out the heroic democracy of the masses of the people in the Asiatic and semi-Asiatic countries." (*Selected Works*, Volume 11, Page 51)

For Lenin this all confirmed the class nature of

political struggle and thinking about the political future, about the "Historical Destiny of Marx's Doctrine", the title Lenin uses for the previous quotation and the next:

"The Asiatic revolutions have revealed the same spinelessness and baseness of liberalism, the same exceptional importance of the independence of the democratic masses, and the same sharp line of division between the proletariat and bourgeoisie of all kinds. After the experience of both Europe and Asia, whoever now speaks of non-class politics and non-class Socialism simply deserves to be put in a cage and exhibited alongside the Australian kangaroo." (Selected Works, Volume 11, Pages 51-52)

What once pertained to Europe is now of Asia and of much more. The life-and-death struggle described in a classic philosophical work is in reality class politics, the class politics that encompasses the world. At a time when society as a civilized entity is endangered by social stratification which calls itself democratic or liberal or socialist, we are compelled to reconsider those moments of participation of the peasant masses which help account for whatever civilization we still have.

The name of Solon is still to be found in the newspapers and the school texts as a personification of political wisdom. What he did was to set Greece on the road to what is legitimately claimed to be the most remarkable achievement of civilization. He involved the peasantry in the revolution which broke the power of the landed aristocrats. Trade and industry of the elemental kind was substituted, but the peasantry took the great role open to it by bringing about the new regime and what we now know of as "the glory that was Greece", especially that startling concentration of civilized accomplishment that was Athens.

In Rome there took place the great revolution led

by the Gracchi. It failed, but peasants right through the peninsula of Italy insisted that citizenship could no longer belong only to the inhabitants of the city of Rome, but should be the possession of the peninsula as a whole. Under the Roman Empire, many historians believe, it was this notion of a universal citizenship which was extended to all the free inhabitants of the Empire that was crucial in maintaining that remarkable political achievement. Indeed, the very concept, citizenship, in Rome came to be associated with the very reality of civilization itself. It is important to remember this today.

What followed in the late Middle Ages was continuity along a similar line. The reason for the failure of such highly advanced centers of civilization as the city-states of Florence and north Italy was that they were unable to incorporate the peasantry of the surrounding areas. It proved impossible to maintain the polarization of urbanized artistic, economic, and social sophistication at one end with rural idiocy, superstition, and isolation at the opposite extreme. The city-state had to give way to capitalistic society, a monarch heading the whole nation, supported to a substantial degree by the feudal landowners. The failure of the prologue to modern society, the attempt of the city-states of Italy (and indeed those of the Low Countries) at popular democracy was based on the failure to involve the peasant masses.

The first great modern revolution was the one that owes more to the peasantry than to any other section of society. The yeoman farmers of England in the English Revolution of the Seventeenth Century were the basis of the finest army that Europe up to that date had known; it first and foremost ensured the success of that revolution. Secondly, the army in discussions with its leader, Oliver Cromwell, produced as a political formation the Levellers, the leaders and spokesmen who formulated the "Agreement of the People" in its various forms. These laid down the

relevant principles of democracy, the popular, democratic content of which has not yet been fulfilled in any modern country. Thus, the yeomanry was not only the fundamental mass leverage of the overturn of the ancient monarchy and its accompanying feudalism; it also put forward clear and distinct political ideas which must be the basis of any socialist society.

From the vantage point of the extensive Russian peasantry, Lenin repeatedly explained that you cannot have socialism without carrying democracy to its extreme, a concept impossible to understand in a historically concrete way unless one begins with the party of the Levellers.

Everyone knows that it was the peasant revolution which helped to break the power of the French aristocrats. But there is something else which the majority of people do not know. All over France, village communes consisting of peasants and agricultural workers organized together and formed the various federations which became the different districts of which France is composed today. While Paris spearheaded the revolution, the new France was built on the Federation established by the actions of the populace in the countryside.

We believe that this achievement of the peasantry in establishing what we know as modern France needs to be solidly established today when the peasants of the world have once again laid claim to the making of history and the advancement of civilization, this time not on a city, or national, but on a world-wide scale. It is not accidental that this tremendous historical event is registered in a piece of writing by Michelet, the famous historian of the French Revolution.

Michelet writes: "This opposition becomes completely insignificant in the midst of the immense popular movement which was asserting itself everywhere. Never since the Crusades was there such a shaking up of the masses, so general, so deep. In '90

the impetus of fraternity, now the impetus of war.

"Where did this impetus begin? Everywhere. No precise origins can be fixed for these great spontaneous acts. In the summer of 1789 during the terrorism of the brigands, the scattered population, even those of the hamlets are afraid of their isolation: hamlets are united with hamlets, villages with villages, even the city with the country. Confederation, mutual help, brotherly friendship, fraternity, this is the idea, the title of these pacts. Few, very few, are as yet written down. At first the idea of fraternity is limited. It involved only neighbors, and at most the province. The great federation of Brittany and Anjou still has this provincial character. Convened on November 26th, it achieved its purpose in January. At the center of the peninsula, far from the main highways in the lonely little town of Pontivy, the representatives of 150,000 national guards are meeting. Only the horsemen wear a common uniform, red jackets with black lapels; all the others distinguishable by their pink, purple and suede lapels, et cetera, recalled at this same gathering the diversity of the cities which sent them. In their coalition, to which they invited all the municipalities of the kingdom, they nevertheless insisted upon forming a permanent family of Brittany and Anjou, 'whatever new departmental division may be necessary for the administration'. They established a system of correspondence between their cities. In the general disorder, in the uncertainty in which they find themselves due to the success of their new order, they arrange at least to be organized separately.

"In the less isolated countries, at the crossing of large routes, especially on the rivers, the pact of fraternity takes on a wider scope. Under the old regime with the multitude of toll charges, and internal customs, the rivers were merely limits, obstacles, fetters; but under the rule of liberty they became the main routes of circulation, they put men in

contact with ideas, with feelings, as well as with commerce.

"It is near the Rhone, two leagues from Valence, in the small market town of Etoile, that, for the first time, the province is renounced; fourteen rural communes of Dauphine unite and embrace the great French unity (November 29th, 1789). A very effective reply from these peasants to the politicians and to the Mouniers who appealed to provincial pride, to the spirit of partition, who were trying to arm the province of Dauphine against France.

"This Federation, renewed at Montelimart, is no longer only Dauphinoise, but is mixed with several provinces from both banks. Dauphine and Vivarais, Provence and Languedoc. This time, therefore, they are French. Grenoble sends people there of its own accord, in spite of the municipality, in spite of its politics; she no longer cares about her role as capital, she prefers to be part of France. All together they repeat the sacred oath which the peasants have already sworn in November: 'No more provinces! the Nation!' And to help each other, to feed one another, to pass the corn from hand to hand along the Rhone (December 13th)."

The work of rural people in transforming society and eradicating ancient ills was continued in the American Civil War. White farmers and black former slaves intervened to bring American civilization to a new height. In the first half of that conflict the farmers of the American northwest opposed the extension of slavery into the free states and territories. These farmers played a crucial role in the creation of a new political party, the Republican Party, dedicated to free states and territories.

In the final decisive years of that war, the slaves themselves flocked to the Northern Army to guarantee the unity of the country and to safeguard and deepen their own emancipation. The stage was being set for something in the next century.

Not only do the present generation of Afro-Americans, themselves a few generations away from Southern soil, rural people undergoing the new impact of urban life and industrial capitalism, battle for equality in every sphere of life. They demand in reality the outline of an entirely new America. Rural people in their transition to urban life have nurtured the pre-condition of a new ordering of the constitutive elements that make America.

In the Twentieth Century the Russian peasants took the stage. It required the Russian peasantry of two revolutions, 1905 and 1917, plus the counter-revolution of the 1920s, to enable us to see clearly an experience that is now thoroughly international. Stalin was forced in his drive for mastery not only to destroy the Bolshevik Party, to stifle free intellectual and artistic development and behead, shackle, and fetter the working class. He had to subjugate the peasantry to ensure his domination of all that had been the product of the Russian Revolution, a domination which enabled him to defeat that revolution in a way that all the reactionary armies had not been able to do. Stalin, with his eyes set on the necessity of economic development of backward Russian society as a whole, unloosed a war upon those he called "Kulaks" — an insulting word referring to the middle layer and the well-to-do among the agricultural population. He sent millions of peasants, torn away from their lands by military power, to Siberia.

At the very same time, in the turn from the port cities of Shanghai and Canton to the peasantry in the interior that took place in 1927-28, the Chinese Communist Party made its own turn — but in an opposite direction. At first it went into the interior of the country for tactical reasons, to escape the persecutions opened upon it in the cities. Mao Tse-tung was theoretically unprepared for the intricacies of the agrarian question. But the objective situation was such, and the readiness of the peasants for self-